

Example: Ancient India SPICE

Social

- Extended family under one roof
- Patriarchy; oldest male holds legal authority; only males could inherit property & be educated; could take a second wife if no children; children took care of parents; women work in home; dowry paid to male family for marriage; suttee required women to cremate themselves with husband
- Varnas social class became rigid into a caste system defined by job & family; caste rules very strict about jobs, marriage, socialization; can't move up; based on religious idea of purity & reincarnation; untouchables even outside the system
- More dharma is expected of higher classes

Political

- Ruler based on divine authority
- Kingdoms often at war with each other
- Kingdom timeline
 - 2600-1500 BCE Harrapan civilization
 - 1500-400 BCE Aryan settlement
 - 300-200 BCE Mauryan empire
 - 0-200 CE Kushan empire
 - 300-500 CE Gupta
 - 500-1500 CE not united
- Alexander the Great's conquest gave Indians a reason to join together under the Mauryan king Chandragupta
- Mauryan empire was highly centralized with governors running smaller provinces for the king; secret police and strong army
- Asoka began as a Mauryan warrior king, but converted to Buddhism and set up hospitals and other aid for the poor and weary

Interaction

- Ganges & Indus Rivers were rich, fertile valleys
- Farmers depend on heavy monsoon rains in the summer
- Cities were carefully planned with broad streets on a grid, large walled neighborhoods, public well water, advanced drainage & disposal system
- Floods, earthquakes, climate changes resulted in abandonment of Harrapan civilization
- Aryan warrior nomads migrate into region and settle by 1000 BCE, blending with the Harrapan descendents
- Iron plow and irrigation made it possible to clear jungles for farming
- Huns eventually ended the age of empires in India for hundreds of years

Cultural

- Priests prayed to fertility god to guarantee harvest
- Early pictographs that we cannot decode

- Sanskrit eventually used to record legends and religious chants, which were eventually written down in the Vedas (Hindu sacred script)
- Hindu came from blend of Aryan & Dravidian religious practices (see chart for details)
- Buddhism developed as an alternative to Hindu beliefs (see chart)
- Religious pilgrimages brought people from far away to see Buddha's relics; pillars, stupas, and rock chambers were built to mark sites of Buddha's life
- Vedas, Bhagavad Gita, Mahabharata & Ramayana tell legends and epics of great warriors and moral lessons
- Indians recognized that the Earth was a sphere that rotated on an axis and revolved around the sun
- Indians used algebra and the concept of zero, which eventually led to our numerical system today

Economic

- Based on farming wheat, barely, peas, millet, cotton, spices (pepper, ginger, cinnamon)
- Copper, lumber, jewels, cotton, luxury goods trade for Mesopotamian textiles & food
- Mostly shipping trade into Persian Gulf
- Commerce expanded under Asoka; India's trade network reached from the Far East to the Middle East
- Kushan empire prospered from Silk Road trade between China & Rome
- Gupta empire later developed a new economic age of cities and trade routes throughout India, earning large profits from luxury goods, precious metals, and religious pilgrimages